

CLAIMS:

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A laundry appliance having:

a cabinet enclosing a laundry treating mechanism;

said cabinet having an openable door in a vertical front face thereof;

a shelf recessed in said cabinet and arranged to be extendable to a horizontal position

5 a predetermined distance below said door sufficient to allow a laundry basket to be placed on said shelf when extended and to allow said door to be opened and closed with said basket on said extended shelf.

2. A laundry appliance according to claim 1, wherein said shelf is incorporated into a drawer positioned below said door.

3. A laundry appliance according to claim 2, wherein said shelf is slidable in said drawer.

4. A laundry appliance according to claim 2, wherein said shelf is pivotable relative to said drawer.

5. A laundry appliance according to claim 2, wherein said shelf is engageable with a portion of said drawer to secure said shelf in a fixed position relative to said drawer and said shelf has an manually graspable opening therein to allow a person to disengage said shelf from said drawer.

6. A laundry appliance according to claim 1, wherein said shelf is pivotable relative to said cabinet.

7. A laundry appliance according to claim 1, wherein said shelf, in its extendable position, is capable of supporting a user weighing in the range of 100 to 250 pounds.

8. A laundry appliance according to claim 1, wherein said shelf is supported solely by runners in a cabinet structure positioned below said laundry treating mechanism.

9. A laundry appliance according to claim 1, wherein said shelf is supported by rollers engaging a floor under said laundry treating mechanism.

10. A laundry appliance according to claim 1, wherein said shelf is extendable via a user operated latch to release a catch, and a spring is used to bias said shelf into said extendable position.

11. A laundry appliance according to claim 1, wherein said latch is foot operated.

12. A support for a laundry appliance, wherein said appliance includes a cabinet having an openable door in a vertical front face thereof, said support comprising:
a structure for positioning said door a predetermined distance above a floor; and
a shelf recessed in said structure and arranged to be extendable to a horizontal
5 position below said door a predetermined distance sufficient to allow a laundry basket to be placed on said shelf when extended and to allow said door to be opened and closed with said basket on said extended shelf.

13. A support according to claim 12, wherein said shelf comprises a recessed compartment in a top surface thereof.

14. A support according to claim 13, including an openable cover for said recessed compartment.

15. A support according to claim 13, wherein said recessed compartment is removable from said shelf.

16. A support according to claim 12, wherein said structure is a pedestal separate from said appliance cabinet.

17. A support according to claim 12, wherein said structure is positioned within said appliance cabinet.

18. A drawer insert system comprising:

a horizontal shelf slidably attached to a drawer in a manner to move between a forward position when said drawer is in an open position, to cover an interior of said drawer, and a rearward position when said drawer is in said open position to expose said interior of
5 said drawer; and

a recessed compartment removably held in said shelf.

19. A drawer insert system according to claim 18, including a cover for said recessed compartment.

20. A support for a laundry appliance, comprising:

a structure for positioning said laundry appliance a predetermined distance above a floor;

a horizontally extendable and retractable drawer located in said structure; and

5 a shelf arranged in said drawer which is movable between a position to cover an interior of said drawer when said drawer is in an open position and a position to expose said interior of said drawer when said drawer is in said open position.

21. A support according to claim 20, wherein said shelf comprises a recessed compartment in a top surface thereof.

22. A support according to claim 21, including an openable cover for said recessed compartment.

23. A support according to claim 22, wherein said cover is transparent.

24. A support according to claim 21, wherein said recessed compartment is removable from said shelf.

25. A support according to claim 21, wherein said shelf top surface has an opening therein which is surrounded by a ledge area, said recessed compartment including a body portion receivable in said opening and a lip surrounding said body portion, which lip rests on said ledge area when said body is received in said opening, said top surface further including an openable cover arranged to lie over said recessed compartment substantially coplanar with said top surface of said shelf when said recessed compartment is present in said shelf and to lie over said opening when said recessed compartment is removed from said shelf.
26. A support according to claim 20, wherein said shelf is slidable in said drawer.
27. A support according to claim 20, wherein said shelf is pivotable relative to said drawer.
28. A support according to claim 20, wherein said shelf, in its extendable position, is capable of supporting a user weighing in the range of 100 to 250 pounds.
29. A support according to claim 20, wherein said shelf is supported by rollers engaging a floor under said laundry treating mechanism.
30. A utility shelf system for use with a laundry appliance, said laundry appliance having a fabric receiving vessel and a support structure to position said vessel a distance above a floor, said shelf comprising:
- a horizontal surface extendable from a recessed position to an extended position to support a load; and
 - a support arrangement to maintain said surface in a horizontal position while supporting said load.
31. A utility shelf system according to claim 30, wherein said support arrangement comprises a slidable drawer.

32 A utility shelf system according to claim 30, wherein said support arrangement comprises support arms.

33. A utility shelf system according to claim 30, wherein said support arrangement comprises runners slidably engaged by said shelf.

34. A utility shelf system according to claim 30, wherein said support arrangement comprises rollers.